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REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS TENTH SPECIAL SESSION

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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Viet Nam

[Original: English]

[17 May 1993]

1. The Government of Viet Nam welcomes the Secretary-General's report entitled "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold war era" (A/C.1/47/7). Viet Nam holds that the report represents a timely effort on the part of the Secretary-General, together with the States Members of the United Nations and other institutions, to build upon past achievements, as well as to tackle the new challenges in the field of disarmament.

2. Viet Nam shares the Secretary-General's assessment that, although significant progress has been made in a number of important areas of disarmament, the world remains a dangerous place. In various regions of the world, while the old conflicts are yet to be over, new conflicts have erupted. Even in Europe, the continent that has enjoyed uninterrupted peace for more than four decades since the end of the Second World War, conflicts have occurred. Those conflicts entail the risks of a new round of arms race and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. What is more, mankind continues to be confronted with the danger of an annihilating nuclear war posed by the existence of the nuclear arsenals and the strategic doctrines on the activation of those arsenals.

3. The above-mentioned world situation proves the Secretary-General right when he disagrees with the view that disarmament is a facet of the cold war which is no longer centrally relevant to international security needs. The three concepts mentioned by the Secretary-General, namely, integration, globalization and revitalization, are of great importance. Nevertheless, it is the conviction of the Government of Viet Nam that, for those concepts to bear actual and positive effects on the disarmament process, it is essential to uphold the priorities and principles for disarmament that were outlined in the Final Document, adopted by consensus at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978 (S-10/2).

4. The multifaceted and interrelated nature of international security requires that disarmament be dealt with in an integrated manner. The Government of Viet Nam fully endorses the Secretary-General's observation that disarmament, the structuring of a new system of international relations and improving economic conditions should be regarded as complementary measures and, as far as possible, should be implemented in a coordinated manner. At the same time, the Government of Viet Nam is convinced that, to realize the imperative of integration of disarmament into the broader international security agenda is to be cognizant of the interrelationship between efforts at disarmament and efforts at the construction of a new international order based upon the principles of peaceful coexistence, the prohibition of the use or threat of use of force, non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and the right of every State to pursue its own path of development. It also calls for resolving the urgent problem of development and for the building of an equitable system of economic relations.

As the Secretary-General has rightly pointed out in the report, there is a constructive parallel between conflict resolution and disarmament. The experience and skills that the United Nations has acquired in weapons inspections and monitoring troop withdrawals can be useful in the application of disarmament measures. However, according to the Final Document (S-10/2), disarmament requires "the conclusion and implementation of agreements on the cessation of the arms race and on genuine measures of disarmament" (para. 19); all States "have the right to participate on an equal footing in those multilateral disarmament negotiations which have a direct bearing on their national security" (para. 28); and "the adoption of disarmament measures should take place in such an equitable and balanced manner as to ensure the right of each State to security" (para. 29). As such, there is a distinction between the disarmament process and peace-keeping operations.

"Peace enforcement", as described by the Secretary-General in paragraph 13 of his report, is largely a measure taken under Chapter VII of the Charter. For that reason, the Government of Viet Nam strongly advocates the Secretary-General's view that "the use of disarmament measures within the framework of peace enforcement is quite distinct from the process of disarmament through negotiation, which several States and elements of the international community have been pursuing for years" (A/C.1/47/7, para. 13). The Government of Viet Nam considers the reference to Security Council resolution 687 (1991) of 3 April 1993 as a distinctive elaboration.

5. World events in the aftermath of the cold war have further vindicated the proposition that the objective of seeking unilateral security through armaments is a dangerous illusion. States have realized more and more clearly that the arms race cannot reduce their vulnerability or lead to absolute security. On the contrary, it consumes the vast resources much needed for their economic growth and development, thereby imposing a heavy burden on their economies and invoking a non-military threat to their security. The success of disarmament endeavours is therefore in the interests of all nations and the globalization of disarmament derives from objective factors. Globalization of disarmament is consistent with the goal of general and complete disarmament.

6. Even under the adverse circumstances of the cold war, the international community has made relentless efforts in pursuit of the cessation of the arms race and disarmament and has made significant achievements as manifested, inter alia, in the existing global multilateral agreements. To address the threat of extinction posed by nuclear weapons, the overwhelming majority of the international community have put forth concrete proposals on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, plans to attain complete nuclear disarmament within a specific time-frame and on nuclear-free zones. The most significant indication of their efforts along the line of globalization of disarmament is their commitment to a non-proliferation regime established through the 1967 Tlatelolco Treaty, the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and through various bilateral or unilateral undertakings. And now, when the post-cold-war period has just begun, a global agreement has come into being in the field of disarmament, namely, the Convention on a Comprehensive Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. In the regions where regional conditions permit, new steps have been taken to advance arms limitation and confidence-building.

7. The Government of Viet Nam is convinced that the present-day international situation offers new opportunities for further globalization of disarmament. The Government of Viet Nam supports initiatives towards this objective such as those taken to strengthen the multilateral disarmament machinery and promote regional arms limitation and disarmament suitable to the particular characteristics of each region. Nevertheless, the Government of Viet Nam maintains that the primary responsibility for halting the arms race and for disarmament still rests upon the nuclear-weapon States and other militarily significant States, which currently spend about 80 per cent of world military expenditure, possess the world's largest arsenals and set the major trends in military technology. They should take the lead in disarmament and make a positive contribution to creating favourable conditions for other States to undertake disarmament.

8. The Government of Viet Nam concurs with the Secretary-General that past achievements in the field of disarmament provide a solid foundation to build upon now that the conditions for progress in this field have been enhanced. Many of the views contained in chapter III of the report, entitled "Revitalization", enjoy wide agreement, particularly those concerning weapons of mass destruction, non-proliferation and confidence-building measures. A number of aspects of the questions of arms transfers and transparency in arms need to be further examined and discussed.

In connection with the report, it should be emphasized that weapons of mass destruction must not only be prevented from proliferating, but must be abolished and banned as well. The strength of the nuclear non-proliferation regime depends both on the non-nuclear-weapon States' strict compliance with their commitment not to acquire nuclear weapons and on the nuclear-weapon-States' adherence to the undertaking that they themselves have assumed under Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The military doctrine, which is based upon the use and the consequent retention of nuclear weapons, undermines the basis for the policy of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Policies that lead to arbitrary and discriminate control of science and technology will hamper every State's right to the peaceful uses of science and technology and will jeopardize efforts at a durable solution to the question of non-proliferation.

9. As has been analysed in the study entitled "Ways and means of promoting transparency in international transfers of conventional arms" (A/46/301), conducted by the Secretary-General with the assistance of a group of governmental experts, arms transfers are carried out for a multitude of reasons and are a deeply entrenched phenomenon of contemporary international relations. Transparency in arms may be helpful in confidence-building in certain cases, but, in general, it does not solve the core issues related to the security of a State, that is, the nature of the political relationships between that State and other States in or outside its region, the military balance between that State and other States in or outside the region. Consequently, in the absence of the measures to ensure their legitimate, fundamental security interests, many States may find the military information provided to them by some other States of insignificant value to their security and of non-substantial use, while they may find that the information that they have to provide in return can have a negative impact upon their defence considerations. The question of arms transfers should be approached in a comprehensive manner and its solution lies in the successful removal of the causes of the arms race. In that regard, the

Government of Viet Nam attached great importance to the promotion of a confidence-building process embracing all the political, military, economic, social, humanitarian and cultural fields.

10. The Government of Viet Nam supports efforts at strengthening the multilateral disarmament machinery. But, in the view of the Government of Viet Nam, any decision taken on this matter should ensure the widest participation and agreement of States Members of the United Nations. Organizational reforms cannot be isolated from substantive objectives.

As in any other field, the competence of the Security Council in the field of disarmament greatly depends upon whether it acts on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations, as stipulated in Article 24 of the Charter.

11. On this occasion, the Government of Viet Nam wishes to reiterate its consistent policy of support and cooperation with all other countries in pursuit of the cause of peace and disarmament. This policy is rooted not only in the Government's full realization of its obligation towards the creation of an international order based upon peace, justice and prosperity for all, but also in its desire to devote all its energy to and ensure a favourable international environment for national economic and social development.